

Educational Ideas and Ideals

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An Address Delivered by

IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.

Murder Dressed as Mercy

MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J.

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Ideas and Ideals in Education

ALOYSIUS J. HOGAN, S.J.
PRESIDENT OF FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

*Presidential Address, University and College Department, at
the Convention of the National Catholic Educational
Association, New York, April 14, 1936.*

FOR the privileged honor of guiding, as president, during the year now closing, the destinies of this department, and for the pleasurable privilege of presiding at our department meetings during this national convention, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation.

Truly indeed are we privileged and specially blessed in our chosen vocation as moulders of youth in the field of education. As Catholic educators we have a very distinct contribution to make in the world of education, and in this I am not stressing the formal teaching of religion as the distinctive element in our contribution. As Catholic educators we differ from secular and so-called non-sectarian educators in manifold ways. Our whole philosophy of life is different from theirs; our entire educational outlook is different; our approach and procedure is different; our educational ideas and ideals are different.

I wish, just briefly to dwell upon this last-mentioned differentiating element, namely, Catholic ideas and ideals in education.

We approach this difficult problem by laying down, in general though accurate terms, a definition of education from the standpoint of the educator. Education is the assiduous application of all those helps by which the physical, intellectual, moral and religious life of the student may be correctly developed. The scope of such education is so to evolve the faculties of the student that he or she may finally, without further aid, freely and properly exercise his or her own activity. I say "properly" to indicate that the purpose of education is not only to confer on the one educated power to perform the tasks imposed by the social exigencies of the times, but also to induce the habit of using this power according to the dictates of right reason.

PRODUCT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

True education is not restricted to the illumination of the intellect, even though this illumination includes the fundamental principles of morality and religion. Unless we add to the illumination of the intellect, discipline in its strict sense, namely, training, by which the faculties are developed, the student is indeed taught, but is not educated. Much less can any system of teaching indicate for itself the name of education from which is divorced moral and religious training.

It must never be forgotten that a Christian, namely, a man raised to the supernatural order by Christ, is something quite different and more noble than the mere man of the natural order. Hence the Christian student, *i. e.*, the student raised to the supernatural order, must be educated in accordance with his or her new dignity and new destiny. His or her education must be the education of a Christian, a Christian education.

Hence, as Pope Pius XI declares in his marvelous Encyclical on "The Christian Education of Youth": "The subject of Christian education is man whole and entire, soul united to body in unity of nature, with all his faculties, natural and supernatural, such as Revelation and right reason show him to be; man, therefore, fallen from his original state, but redeemed by Christ and restored to the supernatural condition of adopted son of God, though without the preternatural privileges of bodily immortality or perfect control of appetite. There remain, therefore, in human nature the effects of original sin, the chief of which are weakness of will and disorderly inclinations" (*"Divini Illius Magistri"*).

In that same Encyclical our Holy Father insists: "The true Christian, product of Christian education, is, to use the current term, the true and finished man of character. The true Christian does not renounce the activities of this life; he does not stunt his natural faculties; but he develops and perfects them by coördinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles that which is merely natural in life and secures for it a new strength in the material and temporal power, no less than in the spiritual and eternal." (Id.).

IDEAL IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION

This then is our ideal in Catholic education. Yes, and the ideal of the Catholic Church, the true and finished man of character. Character means strength and power; character may be wielded for good or evil according as character is right or vicious. Nations will rise or fall, civilizations bloom or perish, Christ will reign or anti-Christ dominate, in accordance with the character of our present youth! Everything depends on the development of right character in our youth.

It is a simple but profound definition which declares that character is life dominated by principles. See how much the definition includes. Life—our life is animal and rational; it is equally natural and supernatural.

But if life is to have character, marked individuality, force and power, all man's multiple life, natural and supernatural, must be dominated by principles. That is to say, all the elements which make up life, its feelings, its emotions, its tendencies and desires, its culture and intelligence, its unlimited yearnings, must all be directed and governed, checked and loosed, by the strong mastering hand of principles. If the dominating principles are true, we have right character; if the dominating principles are false, we have vicious character. In any case we have character, and it is the man of character that shapes and moulds the destiny of mankind for weal or woe. Of the man of character, whether right or vicious, it can be more truly said than of the poets: "Yet we are the movers and shakers of this world forever, it seems."

The future lies in the lap of youth, of youth of character. Character is life dominated by principles. If the world is to be saved, these principles must be right and true. Since our life is both natural and supernatural, since our life depends on reason and on Faith, only the life dominated by right principles of natural reason and true principles of supernatural Faith can develop into the right and true character of which today the world stands in tragic need.

DESERTION OF RIGHT PRINCIPLES

Now one fact is certain. It cannot be denied or doubted that outside the Catholic Church we are witnessing today a

wholesale and tragic desertion of right principles of reason, as we have been witnessing for many years back, by nations as well as by individuals, a wholesale desertion of true principles of supernatural Faith.

The brilliant Oxford scholar, Arnold Lunn, has written a book on "The Flight From Reason." The world today is emotional, behavioristic, blindly mystic, if you will, but it has long since sung its valedictory to reason.

It was only after Mr. Lunn recognized the flight from reason that he could write his book, "Now I See," wherein he discloses why he embraced the principles of supernatural Faith. Reason and Faith rise or fall together! The true Faith is the salvation of sound reason, as sound reason is the prelude to true Faith.

All that I have said comes simply and logically to this—there can be no adequately and integrally right principles of natural reason except in the Catholic Church, which is the depository of supernatural Faith and historically the guarantee of sound reason. If, therefore, we are to train the youth of the world to right character, to a life dominated by right principles of natural reason and true principles of supernatural Faith, that training must be sought where alone it can be found, in the bosom of the Spouse of Christ, the Catholic Church.

Never before in the history of education has so much been written on character training as today; never before has there been so much evidence in the world, not of lack of character, but of lack of right character. The initiate can put their fingers on the nerve of the difficulty. Modern character training is divorced from Faith and religion, and, by a *de facto* consequence, from right reason. The Catholic Church and the Catholic Church alone can train true character, because the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church alone is the custodian of that supernatural life and supernatural Faith to which all men in the present dispensation are called.

SUPERNATURAL WITH NATURAL

Deny men that supernatural life and that supernatural Faith and they quickly lose the center of their natural life, the life of right reason. Consequently, the Catholic Church is the only institution which can in any adequate sense edu-

cate to right character that human nature which fell from a supernatural state in Adam, and which has been restored to a supernatural state by Christ, the second Adam.

By divine mandate education is an essential characteristic of Christ's Church. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, teaching them to observe whatsoever I have commanded you, and behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world." It is Christ who teaches through the Catholic Church and she in turn teaches only Christ. While the natural life is developing in our youth, with it, step by step, the supernatural life must also develop. It is for this reason that the divorce between the natural sciences and the arts, and between the supernatural science and the arts, of human life, is as unnatural as the divorce between man and wife, and as fatal. Hence Catholic education, primary, secondary, collegiate and university, is not a parasitic growth in the life of the Church; it is the necessary and logical development of the Church itself.

Since the weal or the woe of the world depends on the character of our youth, since character is life dominated by principles, since right and true character can only be adequately developed in all its phases by Catholic education, it is with joy and exaltation that I speak to you, Catholic educators of youth, on the vital and sacred topic of Catholic ideas and ideals in education.

Unfortunately for our youth of America, there are many forces—yes, powerful forces, and well supplied with financial endowment—working against us, both directly and indirectly, in our moulding of youth.

Sad to relate, these adverse influences and hostile forces are to be found even among some of the members of Christ's own Church.

We, however, members of the National Catholic Educational Association, are determined to uphold real ideas and real ideals in Catholic education. We glory in our vocation, and we pray abundant thanks to God that He has chosen us to be the moulders of youth.

Wages and Our Immoral Economic Order

IGNATIUS W. COX, S.J.

The third of a series of addresses delivered over the Paulist Radio Station WLWL, New York. The first and second addresses appeared in the Catholic Mind for March 8, 1936.

EVERY individual man has the absolute right from nature and nature's God, to a use in sufficiency of the material goods of this world. This truth is undeniable in the light of the nature of man and the nature of material goods.

God puts every individual into this glorious universe with a solemn obligation to develop himself physically, intellectually, above all, morally. Virtuous living is the supreme end of man in this world, in order that by virtuous living man may win everlasting happiness in the world to come. Now for the fulfilment of each man's duty on earth, a sufficiency of material goods is a normal necessity for man. No less an authority than the standard bearer of Catholic theologians, St. Thomas Aquinas, points out the close connection between material goods in sufficiency and the life of virtue demanded by the natural and moral law.

Here are the very words of St. Thomas: "For the good life of man two things are required, of which the principal one is to act in accordance with virtue. Virtue is that by which a life is well led. The other thing is secondary and as it were instrumental, namely, a sufficiency of material goods, which is necessary for virtuous living." Again the great theologian declares: "A superabundance of riches and beggarly poverty must be avoided by those who wish to lead a virtuous life, in so far as both are occasions of sin. Abundance of riches furnishes occasion for pride: and poverty is the occasion for thieving, lying or even perjury."

These were the sins occasioned by poverty in the mind of the great Doctor of the Church. I wonder what St. Thomas would say today, if he were to behold the spectacle, occasioned by poverty, of the widespread and wholesale frustration of one of man's noblest and most powerful instincts, the family instinct. I wonder what he would say at the spectacle of so many Christians, even Catholics, either

unable to understand, or indifferent to the close connection between a sufficiency of material goods and virtuous living for the masses. I can well imagine the amazement of this brilliant intellect, at the smug, smooth satisfied way in which so many followers of Christ accept our immoral economic order, nursing but one fear—a craven fear of Socialism, a fear that makes them spit out that word, Socialism, to blast with it every attempt at reform. I know that the great Doctor, in his simple, powerful and telling words, would point out in a way beyond my ability, how wrong it is, how immoral, how utterly indefensible, that so many millions should be denied the minimum sufficiency of those material goods which are necessary for virtue, and *that* in an era when human ingenuity can produce a sufficiency for all.

When, oh when, will intelligent men, God-fearing men, above all, Catholic men, see that our present economic order is a mechanism of anti-Christ for the destruction of human souls? When will the scales of blindness fall off the eyes of all, especially leaders, so they can appreciate and remedy the situation so graphically described by Pius XI: "Nevertheless, it may be said with all truth, that nowadays the conditions of social and economic life are such, that vast multitudes of men can only with great difficulty pay attention to that one thing necessary; namely, their eternal salvation. . . . For this pitiable ruin of souls, . . . there can be no remedy other than a frank and sincere return to the teaching of the gospel. . . . All those versed in social matters demand a rationalization of economic life which will introduce sound and true order. . . . This is the perfect order which the Church preaches with intense earnestness, and which right reason demands; which places God as the first and supreme end of all created activity, and regards all created goods as mere instruments under God, to be used only in so far as they help towards the attainment of our supreme end." Could any philosophy be simpler, plainer, or truer than that?

Do you know that private property, is only an instrument, a mechanism, ordained by God, in order that material goods may truly serve their purpose of being useful for all men? Do you know that by the intention of nature and nature's God, it is through the instrumentality of private property that all men are to have the use of material goods

in that sufficiency required for virtuous living. The use of material things by all, individually and collectively, is the very end and purpose and reason of private property. It is on this basis that rational ethics and the Catholic Church defend private property. Listen to Pius XI in a passage I have often quoted to you before and will quote until I get it ringing in your ears, until you repeat it again and again, and hand it on and transmit it to others. It is the answer to that unchristian, that pagan idea of private property, which is held by so many unknowing Christians and Catholics. The Holy Father declares that private property has a two-fold aspect, one individual for the good of the *individual* who possesses it, and one *social*, for the common good of *all*. He further declares that, "the right to own private property has been given to man by nature, or rather by the Creator Himself, not only in order that individuals may be able to provide for their own needs and those of their families, but also that by means of it, the goods which the Creator has destined for the human race may truly serve this purpose."

So the possessors of large fortunes, the fortunate property owners in this country, possess their riches not only for themselves but for others. They are not the irresponsible owners; they are the responsible stewards of God's wealth. How can the property of individuals be for the good of others? I answer with Pius XI; the right to own property is one thing; the proper use of property is another. The rich have most grave obligations of charity, beneficence, and liberality, with regard to their superfluous income. Moreover, the State itself by legitimate laws can see to it that superfluous income is properly distributed. As Pius XI says: "It follows from the two-fold character of ownership which we have called individual and social, that men must take into account in this matter, not only their own advantage, but also the common good. To define in detail these duties, when the need occurs and when the natural law does not do so, is the function of government; provided that the natural and divine law be observed, the public authority, in view of the common good, may specify more accurately what is licit and what is illicit for property owners in the use of their possessions."

Now all this may seem strange and revolutionary even

to many Catholic ears. As a matter of fact the difference between ownership and the proper use of ownership is a logical deduction from the very nature of the institution of private property. Private property is an instrument of nature whereby not only the individual owner, but all men may have a use of material things in that sufficiency required for virtuous living. Private property is a logical deduction from the right of all free human beings to use material goods. The limitation in the use of private property, so that it may not only serve the advantage of the owner but also the common good is equally a logical deduction from the right of all men to use material goods in sufficiency. The very argument which establishes the right of private ownership also limits its extent and use.

Make no mistake about this. What I am saying is fundamental, rational, and likewise Catholic doctrine with regard to private property. This teaching comes down from the days of Aristotle, hundreds of years before the Christian era. Aristotle said: "It is evident that it is better to have property private, but make the use of it common." St. Thomas, centuries after taught the same truth and improved it. Here are the words of St. Thomas: "As regards the power of acquiring and dispensing material goods, man may lawfully possess them as his own: as regards their use, a man ought not to look upon them as his own but as common."

Now this does not mean in the mind, either of St. Thomas or of Catholic moralists and teachers of ethics, that anyone can simply walk in and use the material goods of those who have become private owners of them. What it does mean and means most emphatically is that property owners have a most sacred and solemn obligation under God and the natural law to use their rights of property in such a way that non-owners may have access to their goods on reasonable terms. If one man or a small group of men, by what is an impossible conjecture, got legitimate control of all the land in the United States, their right of ownership, would not and could not, exclude the right of the people of this country to get access to the land or the fruits of the land, on fair and reasonable terms and by just contracts.

Today, as is evident, the only way that multitudes of men can get access to the material goods they need for sup-

port of life and for virtuous living is by letting out their labor by a wage contract to property owners, that is, those who control at least ultimately, a certain amount of material goods. Remember this and keep it well in mind! All men have a right to the use of material goods in the sufficiency necessary for virtuous living. Ownership of property cannot and does not mean the right to deny men the legitimate use of these material goods. Ownership by a few to the exclusion of use by the many is indefensible. The only way that the vast majority of men can get access to these goods for use is by working for a wage.

A wage in money is nothing else under this aspect than a demand on material goods. Since all men have a right to a wage this will in reality constitute a demand on material goods in the sufficiency required for healthy, and virtuous living. If employers of labor, who can do so, do not pay a wage sufficient to constitute a demand on material goods, in a sufficiency for right human and humane living, then in the light of all rational ethics, in the light of all authoritative Christian social teaching, they are depriving the wage earner of what is his absolute right. The right to use material goods in a sufficiency is an absolute right of every man; it is a right prior and antecedent to any acquired right of property. The very right of private property is founded on and established by the antecedent right of man to use material things in sufficiency.

Listen to the words of the brilliant Pontiff, Leo XIII: "The labor of the workingman is not only his personal attribute, it is necessary; and that makes all the difference. The preservation of life is the bounden duty of one and all, and to fail therein is a crime. It follows that each one has a right to procure what is required to live; and the poor can acquire it in no other way than by work and wages. Let it be granted that as a rule workman and employer should freely agree as to wage, nevertheless, there is a dictate of nature more imperious and more ancient than any bargain between man and man, that the remuneration must be enough to support the wage earner in reasonable and frugal comfort. If through necessity or fear of worse evil, the workman accepts harder conditions because an employer or contractor will give him no better, he is the victim of force and injustice."

When we turn the pitiless searchlight of these true and undeniable principles of rational ethics and Christian social doctrine on the wage situation in our immoral economic order, what do we find. A condition which would make devils rock with laughter and bring multitudinous tears to the eyes of the guardian angels of men. For some time past, I have been studying wages by personal inquiry. What I have learned makes me suspect that there is in many quarters simply a wholesale violation of essential justice.

In this whole matter, I am only speaking of those employers who can pay a living wage but refuse to do so. The condition of those who through no fault of their own cannot in all honesty pay more is determined by other principles. We read about a Protestant Minister with his wife and three children who is testing out the \$8.55, that is allowed for food for families on relief. The papers say that this family is going hungry with meat once a week on that amount for diet. Well, how about the families of the men who only have a total income for all purposes of \$70 a month or \$17.50 a week. And this in the midst of a country called Christian and civilized, where the privileged are uniting to defend their American rights to conduct their businesses as they please, which may well mean in the perverted mentality of some the paying of starvation wages.

What must amaze and disgust right thinking men and women in this whole wage question throughout the country is the blindness and stupidity of employers who can pay a living and generous wage, and deny it at a moment when the red serpent of Communism is stalking through the land, making trouble and seeking trouble, and waxing fat and bold on economic distress. Such employers are harvesting Communistic fodder by a denial of a living wage. As Pius XI says: "Even more severely must we condemn the foolhardiness of those who neglect to remove or modify such conditions as exasperate the minds of the people and prepare the way for the ruin and overthrow of the social order."

The New York Times for yesterday quoted an industrialist leader as saying in connection with the service strike that there was need of legislation to protect the public from irresponsible labor leaders. And I submit that there is the same need of legislation to protect the public and the work-

ers from irresponsible leaders of capital and industry. For in the same issue of the *New York Times*, we read of a police investigation of some characters used for strike breaking. A professional strike breaker, giving his services at an enormous daily wage, to break a justifiable strike is one of the most tragic phenomenons of our immoral economic order. He is a Benedict Arnold to the cause of humanity; a vulture that fixes his talons in the prostrate body of the impoverished workers, to fatten himself on the victims of injustice. What should be said of the agencies which employ professional strike breakers for such purposes?

In the meantime, it is heartening to notice that the cause of a living wage gains sympathy from the consumers and the public at large. That is a mentality that will do more than anything else to rectify our immoral economic order. The public and the consumers have in their hands the power of bringing about a true regime of Social Justice and our great task as Catholics is to propagate the correct principles of social justice of Leo XIII and Pius XI. May I ask my hearers to get and study a work called the "Social Manifesto," by Joseph Husslein, S.J., and published by the Bruce Publishing Company. In it are the texts and explanation of Catholic social doctrine. Know this book from cover to cover and inside out; talk, write and preach the principles therein contained. Let us change the mentality of the masses and the war is won. Neither perverted capitalism nor perverted Communism can resist for long a correct mentality of the masses. Ballots not bullets supporting this correct mentality on social justice will win the day. Legislators will not dare to resist the will of an aroused right thinking electorate. And there is need of quick action. Speaking of the need of an ample sufficiency for the workman and his economic security, Pius XI says: "We emphasize them with renewed insistence; for unless serious attempts be made, with all energy and without delay to put them in practice, let no one persuade himself that the peace and tranquillity of human society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution."

After the new King of England, Edward VIII, had visited last week the slums of Glasgow and then the new gigantic and luxurious liner, the *Queen Mary*, he turned to one near him and asked: "How do you reconcile a world that has pro-

duced this mighty ship with the slums we have just visited?" The luxury of the *Queen Mary* and the dark desolation of Glasgow slums can only be reconciled in the mentality of those who prefer matter to mind, magnitude to men. The modern mind has made a god of bigness in business, in production, in profits. To these the modern mind has sacrificed man himself as the ancient Pharaohs sacrificed an army of slaves to the bigness of the pyramids. The problem we have today is to teach the modern mind to prefer men to money and the perfection of man to a pyramid of profits. That is our task to work for man and humanity, to make man better and by better men to make a better universe.

It is of this that Leo XIII spoke in his encyclical on "Christian Democracy": "To make the condition of those who toil more tolerable; to enable them to obtain, little by little, those means by which they may provide for the future, to help them to practice in public and private the duties which morality and religion inculcate; to aid them to feel that they are not animals but men, not heathens but Christians, and so to enable them to strive more zealously and more eagerly for the one thing necessary; that ultimate good for which we are all born into the world."

Murder Dressed as Mercy

MARTIN J. SCOTT, S.J.

*An article excerpted from Columbia (New Haven),
in the issue of April, 1936.*

THE United Press, January 18, 1936, sent out the following news item:

"Mrs. Dorothy Sherwool, 27-year-old former showgirl, was convicted today of first degree murder, for the 'Mercy Killing' of her 2-year-old son."

By "Mercy Killing" is meant the taking of the life of a person who is in great pain or hopelessly invalided. Such taking of life is termed Mercy Killing because it is prompted by the motive of relieving a person from suffering or from hopeless invalidism.

The question arises: Is such procedure right? Is it moral or lawful to take life in order to escape life's burdens? For Christians there is but one answer: such killing is contrary to the law of God, and consequently, is morally wrong. For citizens of the United States, such killing is against the law of the land, and is murder.

Mercy is certainly a most commendable virtue, and truly characteristic of Christianity, but when it is exercised by violating the Divine Commandments it ceases to be a virtue and becomes an offense against God.

God as the Author of our nature gave us our instinct for mercy. But as Creator and Ruler of the world, He also gave us to understand that mercy and every other quality was to be exercised in accordance with His laws.

For a person who believes in God, there can be no question as to the morality of Mercy Killing. Such taking of human life is a moral transgression of the law of God. It may be objected that the State takes the life of a criminal, and in so doing does not violate God's law. But, such killing is another matter altogether.

If a gangster attempts to shoot or to stab you, you have the right to defend your life, even at the cost of killing the aggressor. The State is a corporate body, and to protect the life of its members it has the right to take life. It protects life not only by defending its citizens against violence, but also by preventing violence by punishment of the transgressor.

When a murderer is executed, it is not only a punishment for the crime committed, but also a powerful deterrent against similiar crimes. Since murder is regarded as a most serious crime, the State employs capital punishment as the most effective defense against it. Nations, when at war, likewise take life. But this is done because the Nation's life is at stake. Both capital punishment and war killing are justified by the right of the State to protect its corporate life.

If a ruler of the State or a soldier in the army takes the life of another for personal reasons, under the pretext of service to country, he is guilty of murder.

As an individual has the right to protect himself against unjust assault, so has the State the duty and the right to protect its members against unjust aggression.

The taking of life by due process of law or by war in defense of the Nation is not against the law of God. Here it may be asked: Is it not justifiable for the State to take life in order to protect a person from lifelong suffering? Would it not be right for the State to enact laws which would justify Mercy Killing, just as it has passed laws for the execution of a criminal by due process of law?

There is all the difference in the world in the two cases. Judicial execution is the taking of life as a punishment and deterrent of crime against the body politic which has the natural right and the authority to defend itself. Mercy Killing is the taking of life by a person or persons who have no right or authority over the life of one who is not an aggressor. For a Christian, the matter of Mercy Killing is not open to debate. It is against the divine law.

What reasons may be advanced against Mercy Killing to convince those who are not Christians, or those who do not recognize a power above who has legislated for mankind?

There is such a thing as natural law and natural morality. Even if God's positive law did not forbid stealing, theft would still be wrong because it is against the natural law. Every one of the Ten Commandments has its foundation and justification in the postulates of human nature.

For instance: Would you have any respect for the Author of nature if He allowed a person to steal your goods, or to bear false witness against you, or to alienate the love of your wife, or to ruin the virtue of your daughter? So of the other Commandments—they are all based on the requirements of human nature. The supernatural or positive divine law is, for the most part, an explicit declaration of the natural law. Mercy Killing is against the natural law and consequently unlawful.

Why do we say that it is against the natural law? Because it is contrary to the innate dictates of human nature.

Preservation of life is one of the strongest instincts of man. This instinct is as extensive as the human race. Whatever pertains to man everywhere and always is something natural to him. Whatever is natural to man comes from the Author of human nature, and to go against it is to go against the Author of nature, an act which constitutes a moral transgression, ordinarily termed sin. That is what

makes sin such a serious matter, since it is, when properly understood, a defiance of the Author of nature.

Natural law is the voice of the Creator, telling us what to do or what not to do. Now, to take life without the authority to do so, is to go against the natural instinct of man, which is to preserve life. This instinct is so strong that the generality of mankind submits to every kind of pain and privation rather than lose life.

Notice how earnestly and perseveringly a condemned murder will fight for his life, even though it means prison for the rest of his days. Man naturally dreads life imprisonment, but when the alternative is death he welcomes life imprisonment with all its restrictions and punishments.

Go to a ward in a hospital for incurables, and see how those who are hopelessly invalided cling to life. What does all this signify except that the preservation of life is a natural instinct? It follows, therefore, that the destruction of human life, except in just defense, is against the natural law, and, consequently, immoral.

But, it may be objected: Is it not also natural to avoid suffering? To this it is answered that it is certainly natural to avoid suffering, but the means used must be lawful.

It is natural for a man to marry, but not to marry the wife of another man. It is natural for a man to sleep, but not when he is at a post of duty. And so with regard to suffering, it is natural to avoid suffering but not by unlawful means.

A night watchman, for instance, might be suffering from fatigue and cold on a bitter winter's night, and he could get relief by turning aside into a warm and cozy room, but it would be at the cost of leaving unguarded what it was his duty to safeguard. To relieve his suffering under those circumstances would be unlawful. To this it may be objected that to seek relief under such circumstances is unlawful not for avoiding suffering but for neglect of duty. Even so, it shows that although it is natural to avoid suffering, it is not always right to do so.

This brings us to the crux of the matter, namely: Is it lawful for a man to take his own life or the life of another in order to avoid suffering?

Some persons, who do not believe in a personal God who is the Author and Ruler of mankind, and some, also, who consider themselves Christians, assert that to take one's own life, or that of another who consents to it in order to avoid suffering, is lawful. They contend that man's life is his own to dispose of as he wills. In other words, these persons hold that suicide is not wrong, nor is it wrong to deprive of life an invalid who consents to be put to death.

Their contention rests on the assumption either that they are not accountable to a power above for the disposal of their life, or that the avoidance of suffering is a justification for the taking of life. Even those who deny a personal God base their justification of Mercy Killing mainly on the ground of relieving suffering.

There is a principle of philosophy that the nature of some things is more readily manifested in their effects than in themselves. For instance, a stick of dynamite looks to be quite harmless. A child might handle it with impunity. Its effects, however, demonstrate that it has the power of a thousand giants. A stream impregnated with typhoid germs looks limpid and refreshing, yet the wayfarer who drinks of its inviting water soon finds himself in mortal illness.

It is the same with things in the moral order.

Why is it, for instance that the State, which sends thousands of men to almost certain death in time of war, nevertheless, ordinarily makes such strenuous efforts to safeguard the lives of its citizens?

A man accused of murder is afforded every protection of the law, in order that an innocent man may not lose his life. Sometimes a trial with its appeals runs on for over a year and costs the State hundreds of thousands of dollars. Why all this expense, and time, and trouble? It is in order that a man may not lose his life unjustly.

The State, which is apparently so reckless of life in war, employs every possible means to save a single life because of the principle involved. It might seem a small matter, the loss of an individual life, but justice is of so much importance that if it were disregarded no life would be safe.

When a man is on trial for his life, it is the Community that is virtually in jeopardy, for if justice does not prevail no one can feel safe.

Mercy Killing in an individual case may seem to be an act of kindness, but in its logical and legitimate consequences it would result in cruelty to Society generally. It might be a kindness to the victim of a contagious disease to let him leave quarantine while infected, but in the end it would be an injustice to the Community.

Mercy Killing, if legalized, would open the door to a train of evils. If allowing another to kill a willing victim were made legal there is no end to the harm it might work in a Community.

We must remember that in every profession and career there are unprincipled persons who for a consideration would connive at anything, no matter how immoral, provided the law furnished them with the least pretext for justification.

Advocates of Mercy Killing assert that the conditions for its use would be so carefully specified that only those who wished would be liable to its procedure. But designing persons, to whose advantage it would be to have some individual pass away, could easily get witnesses, both legal and medical, to affirm that the one put to death had requested it.

Moreover, infant murder could be committed with impunity, since with infants, consent is out of the question. Mercy Killing in that case would depend on the parents, who, if they wanted to get rid of a child, would know how to obtain the attestations required by law.

Moreover, Mercy Killing would encourage suicide, as it would offer to an emotional person, in temporary pain or depression, a way out of passing trouble.

Besides, imagine the distress of mind an invalid would be in, if he knew that there was a legal way of ending his life. He would fear that in some way or other something he might say or do would be construed into his consent to die. Old persons would be in constant fear that those who were hoping for an inheritance would devise some means of hastening death.

Furthermore, even if all the safeguards of legal killing were maintained, Mercy Killing would have a detrimental effect on society. People, instead of exercising courage and fortitude in the struggle of life, would surrender to the very obstacles, which if bravely met, would make them virile and vigorous members of the Community.

The fallacy back of Mercy Killing is that a person may dispose of his life as he wills. But all the power and genius of mankind cannot give life. Life is from the Author of life alone. Parents are only the medium of life, not its cause.

The farmer who ploughs the field and cultivates it is not the source of the harvest. Unless the Creator had endowed the grain with reproductive power all the ploughing and tilling of the soil would not produce a crop.

In the providence and wisdom of God, parents are necessary for the life of offspring, but although necessary, they are not the cause. Fuel and water are necessary for the creation of steam, but all the fuel and water in the world would not make steam unless the Author of nature had imparted to water the capacity to vaporize under the influence of heat.

It is so with life. Parents are the necessary condition for offspring, but it is the Creator who gives life. Not in the sense that each time that a child is born the Creator personally performs an act of creation, but that by His creative laws, made once for all, the birth of a child is His creation.

This being so, God is the Author and Lord of life. Dominion over it is His alone. It is for Him to terminate it, as it was He who originated it. He does not by a personal act terminate it any more than by a personal act He originated it. Life terminates by the various vicissitudes and ailments which constitute man's mortal career.

These events of life are part of God's providence and the expression of His permissive will. For man to destroy what is not in man's power to originate, is to usurp the dominion of the Creator.

Man's life on earth is a time of probation. The grave is not the end, but only the portal to endless life. Christ chose the cross because the cross is the portion of every child of Adam. Sooner or later all of us have our Calvary. Whether our Calvary will be the prelude to the glories of the Resurrection depends upon how we carry our cross. If rightly borne, it will raise us from earth to heaven, from mortal life to glorious immortality.

The purpose of religion is not to do away with the cross, but to give strength to carry it meritoriously.

Mercy Killing is the proposal of despair. It is the avowal that man is but an animal, and a creature of time not of eternity. It overlooks the fact that the Creator has all eternity to justify His ways and to reward those who during the brief span of mortal life show, by their faith and patience, that His will, not their own, is the law of life.

Mercy Killing is the death of hope. If legalized it would breed an epidemic of despair.

Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, has proclaimed that they, who on earth are faithful subjects of God, will be hereafter His beloved children in that blessed Kingdom which knows no pain, no sorrow, no end.

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